

I support media diversity

27 May 2003

Dear Chairman and Members of the FCC:

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules.

The FCC's active reluctance to make widely known the commission's intention to deregulate the media industries along the lines of 02-277 suggests that an informed public might have reason to question the deregulation and consolidation specifics that comprise the proposed changes in this republic's broadcast media ownership rules.

While media diversity cannot guarantee a healthy democracy-one characterized by the exchange of ideas and the open discussion of politically and socially controversial topics-it can ensure a greater probability that divergent viewpoints reach a greater number of citizens. If the majority of this nation's populace "gets its news" over the broadcast airwaves, specifically the television airwaves, then it is this nation's government's responsibility to ensure that its regulatory apparatus does not impede the dissemination of information, including the presentation of minority viewpoints and ideologies-including, especially, those viewpoints that might conflict with the goals of the commercial interests in whose trust, by technological default, have been placed the shared airwaves.

Government-directed deregulation that allows virtual monopolization of the broadcast media along with the print media constitutes such an impeding of the dissemination of divergent and conflicting viewpoints.

BBC director general Greg Dyke's having recently warned against the Americanization of the British media and this nation's having had to turn to the online foreign press during the current crises for balanced reporting serve as but two indicators that an open discussion of things as they are is needed. To compound this immediate concern by failing to invite the people of this nation into debate over the revision of broadcast ownership rules smacks of the seemingly parliamentary arbitrariness of the eighteenth century that gave impetus to some of Thomas Paine's words.

Postpone the commission's vote. Hold official hearings throughout the country-and hold a few in neighborhoods, as it were, most troubled by the proposed deregulation: work toward a balanced representation-even though this is not the usual manner in which the commission does business. The proposed additional deregulation of the industry can in no way be considered usual.

Thank you,

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